

# THE ORTHODOX MESSENGER





# SAINT ANDREW OF CRETE

By the Very Rev Fr N Patrinacos



St. Andrew was a great theologian and hymn writer (660-740). He was born in Damascus and became archbishop of Gortyna in Crete about the year 692. As a child the saint was

unable to speak. His parents, who were devout Christians, took him to a particular Church where he received communion. Upon partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, the child began to speak. Saint Andrew quickly learnt the sacred writings and very soon became knowledgeable in the divine and sacred Scriptures. He wrote many hymns and in particular a series of Canons. He is the inventor of this form of composition. Many of his compositions, centered on prayer, sin and repentance. His most famous piece, the Great Canon, contains more than 250 strophes. Also, a considerable number of his homilies have survived. His feast day is on July 4.



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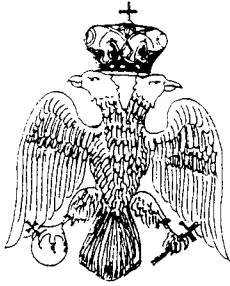
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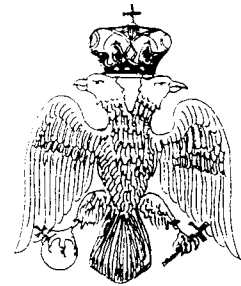
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## THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH



### **Full title:**

His All Holiness, Bartholomeos I, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch.

### **Ecumenical See:**

Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey.

### **Background:**

The Ecumenical Patriarchate or the Great Church of Christ is one of the most ancient centres of the Christian Church. It was founded as "the Church of Byzantium" by St. Andrew the Apostle (c. 36 A.D.).

The ancient city of Byzantium was later made (331 A.D.) the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire by Constantine, the Great (306-337) under the official name New Rome but it is known as *Constantinople*. By virtue of its position as the "Queen of Cities" and the capital of the Byzantine Empire it became a very important jurisdiction of the Christian world.

The Second Ecumenical Council (381) recognised the See of Constantinople as a Patriarchate, while the Fourth (451) as the *first* See of the East and second only to Rome.

In the year 595 the Patriarch of Constantinople was recognised as *Ecumenical Patriarch* and his See as the "Universal See".

After the Great Schism of 1054 the Ecumenical Patriarchate emerged as the world centre of the Orthodox Church and the Patriarch was recognised by the Orthodox leaders as *Primus inter Pares*, "First among Equals".

St. Andrew the Apostle is considered to be the first occupant of the Throne of Constantinople, whilst its present successor, Patriarch Bartholomeos 1st, is the 270th occupant of the Ecumenical Throne.

### **HIS ALL-HOLINESS THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEOS I**

His All-Holiness BARTHOLOMEOS I (Dimitrios Archontonis) was born in Hagioi Theodoroi, Imbros island (Gokceada - Turkey), on the 29th of February 1940.

He attended Primary School in Imbros and High School (Zografion Lycee) in Constantinople (Istanbul). He received his Diploma of Theology from the Theological School of Chalki (Hons) in 1961, and entered the Priesthood in Imbros as a Deacon on the 13th of August 1961. For two years, from 1961 to 1963 he fulfilled his military obligations as a Turkish Citizen, serving as an Officer in the Turkish Army.

As an Ecumenical Patriarchate's scholar from 1963 to 1968, he undertook post graduate studies at the Ecumenical Institute of Eastern Studies in Rome, the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey in Switzerland and the University of Munich, specialising in Canon Law. In 1968 he gained his Doctorate at the institute of Rome (the Gregorian University), submitting his thesis on "Concerning the codification of the Holy Canons and the Canonical Decrees in the Orthodox Church".

In 1973 Archimandrite Bartholomeos was unanimously elected, by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as Metropolitan of Philadelphia and consecrated as a Bishop at Christmas 1973 in the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George, Constantinople. Since March 1974 he served the Church in the capacity of a member of the Holy Synod.

On the 14th of January 1990, he was elected Metropolitan of the historic city of Chalcedon. On the 2nd of November, 1991, after the late Patriarch Dimitrios I slept in the Lord, the Holy Synod unanimously elected Metropolitan Bartholomeos as Archbishop of Constantinople - New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch.

His All-Holiness, apart from Greek, is a

fluent speaker of Turkish, Italian, Latin, English, French and German. He is a founding member of the Society of the Canon Law of the Eastern Churches and served as its vice president for several years.

For 18 years (8 as Vice-President) he served as a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches & WCC) and participated in three General Assemblies of the WCC (the 4th, Uppsala 1968, the 6th, Vancouver 1983, and the 7th Canberra 1991). At the 7th Assembly, he was elected a Member of the Central Committee and the Executive Committee of the WCC.

Patriarch Bartholomeos 1 has paid official Apostolic visits to the Holy Mount Athos (Greece), to the Church of Crete (Greece), to the Patriarchates of Alexandria (Egypt), Antioch (Syria and Lebanon), Jerusalem, Moscow and Russia, Belgrade and all Serbia, Bucharest and Rumania (2 times), Sofia and Bulgaria, Tbilisi and all Georgia, to the Orthodox and the Lutheran Churches of Finland, as well as to the Eastern Orthodox Church of Ethiopia, the Lutheran Church of Sweden, the Roman Catholic Church (Vatican), the Ecumenical Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic and Evangelical Churches of Germany, the Anglican Church (United Kingdom), the Roman Catholic Church of France and several Sees of his own Ecumenical Throne.

Patriarch Bartholomeos convened extraordinary meetings of the Heads of all the Autocephalous and Autonomous Orthodox Churches in Constantinople in 1992 and on the historic Greek island of Patmos in 1995. Additionally he convened biannual meetings of all the Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in both 1992 and 1994, in Constantinople.

He has been awarded Doctorates of Theology h.c. by the University of Athens, the Theological Academy of Moscow and the Holy Cross Theological College of Boson U.S.A. He was also awarded Doctorates of Philosophy h.c. by the City University of London, the University of Crete and the Department of the Environment of the Aegean University, Mytilene. He is also a Fellow of the Orthodox Academy of Crete and an honorary member of the Pro Oriente Institute in

Vienna. His All-Holiness, accepted a biannual invitation from the President of the European Parliament and addressed its members in 1994.

Patriarch Bartholomeos has participated in numerous inter-Orthodox, inter-denominational and international meetings, conventions and congresses.

The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos takes a particular interest in environmental issues and has initiated a number of strategies for the protection of Creation.

#### Q.1. THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT

A.1. The mere fact that His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos, the most senior of all Orthodox Patriarchs of the world, comes to Australia only five years after his election, signifies his keen interest to honour and bless this country in which hundreds of thousands of Greek Orthodox faithful live and prosper.

Australia is not unknown to His All Holiness since he has already been here twice before as a member of different Church delegations of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and he had the opportunity to experience the honest endeavours of cultural diversity and true democracy in our society.

His All Holiness has not yet visited the United States, for example, another great country where more than two million Greek Orthodox faithful form the most vibrant Greek Orthodox community outside Greece, because his predecessor, the late Patriarch Dimitrios, had already visited America in 1990.

It is historically significant that this visit shall be the very first of any Ecumenical Patriarch to Australia.

#### Q.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT AND WHAT IT HOPES TO ACHIEVE

A.2. The purpose of the visit is, first of all, to bless and encourage the Church which belongs to his immediate jurisdiction, that is the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, and also all Orthodox faithful of other ethnic backgrounds.

A further purpose of his visit is to greet all other Christian denominations and non-Christian religious readers, since His All Ho-

liness is well-known for his ecumenical interest and experience throughout the past twenty years at least.

A third reason for this Patriarchal visit is to congratulate the Commonwealth and State political leaders for their achievements in working towards a more tolerant and reconciled society. At the same time, His All Holiness would on this occasion thank Australian authorities of every kind for making this great country a hospitable home and even a place of refuge for so many people from different parts of the world.

**Q.3. THE TIES THAT BIND THE CHURCH TO AUSTRALIA**

A.3. The Greek Orthodox Church in Australia has developed spiritual, cultural and social links in a very successful way with Christians of other denominations, as well as with all people of good will. In so doing, the faithful of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese have become day by day an integrating factor of modern Australia.

**Q.4. THE CONTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE OF GREEK ORIGIN - ALMOST ONE MILLION OF THEM - TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIA AND ITS COMMUNITY**

A.4. There is almost no field of public life in which Greek Orthodox have not contributed with their hard work, their deep faith in God and in human dignity, as well as in the ideals minted throughout the many centuries of Greco-Roman and Judea-Christian traditions.

With their many talents and professional skills, Greek Orthodox faithful have contributed substantially to the development of the Australian way of life in social, political, cultural, scientific and sporting endeavours.

**Q.5 WHY A PATRIARCH HAS NEVER VISITED BEFORE**

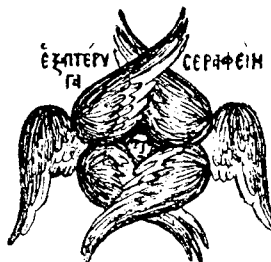
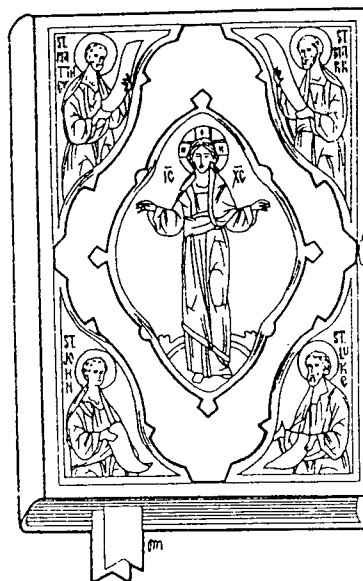
A.5 While it is the first time that an Ecumenical Patriarch shall visit Australia, it is quite clear on the one hand that the Ecumenical Patriarch was not normally in a position to travel abroad - as was also the case for the Pope - until only a few decades ago.

On the other hand, Australia is the most

distant country from the See of His All Holiness, which is always Constantinople (Istanbul)

**Q.5. WILL HE BRING WITH HIM ANY PARTICULAR MESSAGE TO AUSTRALIA AND AUSTRALIANS?**

A.5. Of course, wherever the Ecumenical Patriarch travels, he brings a message of Christian optimism from the mother Church of Constantinople which was for more than a millennium the source of light and civilisation for the entire world, both East and West, and which still remains the centre of coordination and peaceful cooperation of all Orthodox activities throughout the modern world.



# IN MEMORY OF METROPOLITAN IAKOVOS IKONIUM

By Archbishop Stylianos of Australia

Asked to write about the late Metropolitan Iakovos of Ikonium, Dean of Halki and my own venerable Spiritual Father, I accepted with gratitude. For I knew from beforehand that this memorial would occasion a personal confession.

Who has been blessed even once to witness a miracle and has not spoken of it with awe and contrition for the rest of their life? Anyone having the good fortune of meeting a Saint - not as an apparition, but as a human simple and mundane - cannot believe that there is anything 'more natural' for humanity than saintliness. Such a comforting message must be shared with everyone.

Iakovos of Ikonium was a saint of our time, of our world and of our way. Nothing external distinguished him from his fellow clergy at the Patriarchate. However, in his few years on this earth, those who met him had the intense feeling that he silently bore within himself the world of the incorporeal. This is precisely why I shall hardly be concerned here with the usual biographical details. I shall say only that he was born in Constantinople in 1916 and died at the Hippokrateion Hospital in Athens aged 49. Everything else may be found in brief biographies written by various people after his death.

It is not, therefore, my intention to present here a photograph, but rather a portrait. And I do not feel that this approach is mistaken. For saints do not have photographs but icons. A photograph is produced by a machine unconsciously, copying the undeveloped immediacy of this world. A portrait and icon is a story told by the soul, recollecting in particular through memory and conscience - and thus with toil and wonder - the projections given to the created world by the transfigured world beyond.

I am of course aware that, in so writing, I shall perhaps scandalise some - not only the irreligious and those of little faith, but even the faithful; those at least who believe that saintliness is an elitist feature of the supernatural life. I also realise that if the

late Metropolitan were able to read all that I am here writing about him, he would think of me as being either impious or crazy. Yet precisely because he experienced among us the traditional faith and virtue with spartan simplicity and dignified humility, I feel that he has given us the most convincing proof of his saintliness. It is certainly true, as the Athonite monks claim, that "a saint conceals himself, but the grace of God betrays him".

At any rate, in speaking of a man like Iakovos of Ikonium, one undergoes a profound trial that requires great tolerance and even courage. Usually when secular people speak of some exceptional person of their era or environ, they do so with such self-conceit that you would think they implicitly consider themselves as being personal partakers of that greatness. This is not the case in the Church. When one speaks there of the mystery of perfection, and presents a witness concerning what the grace of God has achieved in a particular person, one has a profound sense of double contrition: firstly before God, and then also before the earthly hero of these godly adventures.

Thus with this awesome contrition, which acts upon me as a mystical cleansing, I sketch these few lines about the most complete person that I have been blessed to meet, and who - contrary to all anticipation - was literally able to 'allure' me to the priesthood. I shall depict certain characteristic moments from his life, and I am sure that the sensitive reader will easily be able to construct the rest.

## 1. The Man of Silence

Seferis somewhere mentions that silence is the distinguishing quality of a person. This I find to be absolutely confirmed in Iakovos of Ikonium. His silence, however, was not merely an absence of words; he spoke according to need. His silence was primarily a form of modesty in its most spiritual combination with discipline. He never spoke about himself. Yet, so great was his aura that in his presence it was impossible to think of anything but him. This silence was to a certain degree also a kind of protest

against the overabundance of words in our times. It is characteristic that this man who taught the subjects of Pastoral Theology and Homiletics over a certain period at the School, preached so little and so infrequently in Churches where he served. To think that he blessed God's people for fifteen years as Bishop alone, and some ten years prior to this as Priest and Deacon!

Nonetheless, the lack of words was carefully substituted by his living example, though again without the slightest desire of self-projection. With his actions he unpretentiously offered the measure of truth; with his natural gestures - whether walking, coughing or simply breathing - he was intent upon making the most generous and noble gesture without anyone perceiving it.

His whole life was full of examples such as the following. During Lent, crowds would arrive from the village of Halki to hear the Salutations to the Theotokos in the School Chapel. The girls of the island would gather a little earlier, prior to the commencement of the Service, and they would leisurely stroll through the gardens of the School with their parents until the sound of the bell. This gave them the opportunity of exchanging furtive glances with the boarding seminarians. The Dean, who wanted to prepare the celibate officers of the Church, sensed some danger. So he ordered the porter of the large iron gate to refrain from opening until five minutes before the ringing of the bell, thereby ensuring that visitors would directly proceed to the Chapel. Crowds would gather outside the closed iron gate, sometimes up to an hour earlier.

Among this crowd, once, was the only sister of the Metropolitan, the now late Sophia. She had been a mother to the family after the untimely loss of their parents. She was older than the Metropolitan and therefore his natural guardian at that time; for years she was also ill and depended on one kidney. The porter felt that he would obviously be justified in making an exception for the aged and infirm sister of the Dean, but was hesitant to take the initiative as he knew that the Dean was uncompromising. On the internal telephone, then, he announced that the Dean's sister had arrived and that it did not seem proper to have her wait outside for a whole hour. The Metro-

politan's reply was entirely unexpected: "Provide her with a chair since she is ill, but she too is to enter only when the gate has been opened."

## 2. The Man of Prayer and Worship

There exists a handwritten essay of the late Metropolitan, composed when he was 17 years of age and entitled "Autobiography". Among other things, there is reference to the following revealing description of his inner vocation and later development: "The various Services always created within me a real joy. The Church attracted me, and not only the Church, but everything that was related to it. Wherever I heard that there was a sermon, there I would be. Even for religious classes at school I showed a particular liking". The Sincerity of this adolescent confession may only be appreciated by those who later witnessed his life as a liturgical celebrant.

Dignity and almost pedantic adherence to the liturgical rubrics of the Church were most characteristic features of the Metropolitan. Yet these too had nothing to do with any legalism or pharisaism. Even in the daily Services of Matins and Vespers at the School in which he would not serve, he always stood beside the Dean's throne. Entering last into the Chapel - all students first paraded before him for a quick inspection - he would move to his place beside the throne, cross his hands, place them quietly on the brace of the seat, and from this position he would not move, almost as if he were a "Petrified King". With the stature of an archangel, he shone in our young impressionable eyes like a vigilant captain on the bridge. And he truly was the captain of the spiritual ship which carried young men, conscripted from the whole of the christian world, to the fulfilment of the dream and programme of the Church in order to make them "fishers of people"!

The criterion of genuine worship, for him, was conscious participation in the prayers and psalms. He would not tolerate any whining, "churchy" voice during readings, nor unnecessary intonations in chanting. Through his example and teaching, he wished to inspire us with the ideal of being equally modest and unpretentious in reading and worship, as well as in liturgical gestures and movements. He was neither dissonant nor sweet-voiced, but his simple and



unaffected manner of celebrating rendered his services the most devotional liturgical gatherings of his time. Another example of his eagerness and modesty in this was the manner in which he prepared himself, not only spiritually but also practically, on the eve of each Divine Liturgy. We used to walk beneath his windows at the School, and often we could hear him as he practised the Dismissal hymn or Matins chants for the following morning. He did not trust his average knowledge of music, and he wanted to render the hymns as correctly as possible. There was no end to our amazement: our Dean was "practising" no differently to a first year student.

### 3. The Man of Charity

Charity invariably assumes two forms: it may be offered to the poor in an organised way in order to be seen and to create the feeling that one is performing a good deed. Alternatively, it may be offered with the greatest possible secretiveness - perhaps through a sense of shame that there is so little justice in the world and so one must resort to the inefficiency of alms which embarrasses both the person giving and the one receiving. The Dean adopted the second form. His charity presupposed his passion for justice. In matters of justice he was unyielding and unbiased, even when this brought him into conflict with close friends or respected Hierarchs of the Patriarchate.

There are some memorable instances of his relationships on a professional level, that show the profound sense of justice in his heart and how his conscience was a "measure of precision".

If everyone who knew him also knew of his fairness, few people in fact knew of his active life of charity. Those who did, knew not from stories about him but only because they were immediately involved in assisting him to execute some act of philanthropy. I shall refer to some further characteristic examples of which we learned only

posthumously and which his close friends, who still live, remember in detail.

Upon his appointment to the position of Dean of the Theological School, that unforgettable Lent of 1951, he ordered the School Supervisor to provide all students with a copy of a questionnaire, from which he sought to learn our most basic concerns with questions ranging from socio-psychological to financial matters. After forming some idea about each of us, he endeavoured within only a few days to respond to all our needs, not just as a father but as a mother. For only a mother is able to give even beyond her natural powers. From that time

and for the rest of his tenure, he made sure that the poorest students received a small monthly allowance, discreetly presented by the Supervisor who would say: "The school is offering you this small assistance."

To the day of his death, no one knew that this small allowance was not in fact provided by the school, but by the Metropolitan himself - from his own personal salary or from money which he would take from his businessman brother. He would some-

times even turn to the lower clergy of the Patriarchate, with whom he was closely related and from whom this particularly proud and dignified man was at times forced to borrow. He always used to say that his wage did not suffice for his many needs, and although everyone was curious to know what this frugal and ascetical Hierarch did with his money, no one was game enough to ask. This and other similar questions were only answered posthumously, when people began to speak more freely about his saintly life.

He was, however, personally obliged to make the most moving revelation only moments before dying, encouraged in this by his only brother who remained affectionately by his side during that time. Conscious of the fact that the end was fast approaching, the Metropolitan asked for his wallet and



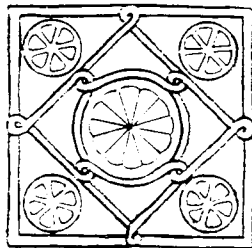
METROPOLITAN IAKOVOS OF IKONIUM

drew out a slip of paper with some names and addresses. He gave this to his brother, requesting that he pay whatever was due to all those people, since he no longer had the opportunity to do so. His brother was speechless; how could this Bishop have accumulated such an enormous debt from strangers after the amounts he had occasionally borrowed and the sound salary that he earned. Despite the tragedy of the moment, he demanded an explanation, but the Metropolitan did not wish to speak. He was immersed in spiritual silence, fixing his large eyes pleadingly on his distressed brother. Finally, when the latter hesitatingly asked the Bishop to tell him at least what the outstanding account amounted to, the face of the Metropolitan lit up and in much pain he stammered: "It is much, very much. Pay them for as long as you can. I had personally assumed the responsibility of caring for them while I lived. They are all poor."

After these words, a profound sense of peace came upon his face. He never again opened his eyes or mouth. He had uttered the swan-song of life and of love. Of such a luminary we, his disciples, can say no more than the wonderful words of Plato intended for Socrates: "Indeed, it is always the greatest delight for me to recall Socrates, when I speak of him myself or when I hear others doing so." [Phaedo 58 d]

(transl. J.C.)

[The original Greek text appeared in 'Εστία Θεολόγων Χάλκης, Athens 1980.]



## Ecumenical Councils

By the Late Very Rev N Patrinos

By Ecumenical Councils, seven General Councils of the entire Christian Church are signified. They cover the period between 325-757, and their decisions are at the foundation of Christian doctrine accepted by both the Eastern and Western segments of the Christian Church. The Western Church accepts as Ecumenical subsequent Councils that were convened and attended only by the authorities and delegates of the Roman Church. These Councils, the last of which is the II Vatican Council (1962-65), are not accepted by the Orthodox Church as bearing either the validity or the authority that the seven truly Ecumenical Councils possessed; and for that matter; no decisions of these Roman Catholic Councils have any bearing on the Orthodox Church. For better appreciating the reasons for being convened and the decisions reached, all seven Ecumenical Councils are presented in sequence rather than in alphabetical order.

### First Ecumenical Council

The First Ecumenical Council was summoned by emperor Constantine the Great in 325, May 20th. The Council assembled at Nicaea in the province of Bithynia and was formally opened by Constantine himself. The main reason for its being called was the Arian controversy. Arius, a presbyter from Alexandria, held that Jesus Christ was created by God and thus there was a time when 'he was not'. His original intent was to attack another heretical teaching by which the three persons of the Godhead were confused (Sabellianism). A number of bishops followed Arius, and the Church went into her first and perhaps deepest division of faith. Up to then, statements of faith were incorporated into Creeds recited by a candidate to Baptism. A baptismal Creed representing Arianism was submitted to the Council by Eusebios of Nicomedia but was at once rejected. Another Creed, representing the baptismal Creed of Jerusalem, was finally accepted with the addition of the very important term 'homousios', meaning of the 'same substance'. Thus, the view that Christ was of the 'same substance' with the Father was received as orthodox. This Creed, as amended by the Council and then completed by the Second Ecumenical Council, is our

own Creed today, and is known as the Nicene Creed. Another important decision of this Council was the establishing of a calendar formula by which Easter ought to be celebrated. The Council also regulated matters of ecclesiastical importance regarding territorial and moral questions pertaining to both clergy and laity. One particular delegate, deacon Athanasios from Alexandria, proved the champion of orthodoxy by his statements of faith and the draft of the Creed that bears his name. Another delegate, who by his eloquent argument against imposing compulsory celibacy on all ranks of clergy prevented outright celibacy in the Orthodox Church, was Paphnutios, an Egyptian who had been a disciple of St. Anthony. He had suffered such hardships and cruelty during the persecution of Maximin that his mutilated body proved an object of veneration to the assembled bishops, and his recommendations were highly respected. The number of bishops who attended the Council was 318. Hence, this Council is also known as the Synod of the 318 Fathers. It closed on July 25, 325. Their memory is commemorated by the Orthodox Church on the Seventh Sunday after Easter

### Second Ecumenical Council

The Second Ecumenical Council was convened by emperor Theodosios I at Constantinople in 381. Theodosios proved to be a champion of the orthodox faith, and his intent in calling this Council was to completely eradicate Arianism and condemn Macedonios and Apollinarianism by establishing the teaching on the unity of the Holy Trinity and the complete manhood in Christ. The Creed received by the First Ecumenical Council was given its final form, in which it is in use today. On the Godhead, the Council accepted, 'one God in three hypostases' as the base of the Christian faith. In matters of hierarchical privileges, the Council decided that the bishop of Constantinople should have honorary precedence over all Churches, save that of Rome. Two of the more important delegates who played a great role in the development of Christian doctrine were Gregory, bishop of Nazianzus, and Gregory, bishop of Nyssa.

### Third Ecumenical Council

This Council was convened at Ephesos in 431 by emperor Theodosios II, for the purpose of condemning Nestorios, arch-

bishop of Constantinople, for his teaching that there were two separate persons in the Incarnate Christ, the one Divine and the other Human. This was directly opposite to the orthodox doctrine by which the Incarnate Christ was a single Person, at once God and Man. One of the high points of Nestorios' teaching was the rejection of the name 'Theotokos' (bearer of God) for the virgin Mary. Nestorios called the Virgin Mary Christotokos (bearer of Christ) rather than Theotokos. Nestorios was condemned and the teaching of Christ being perfect God and perfect Man was reiterated. Also, the name 'Theotokos' was firmly established in the liturgical and theological usage of the Church. Two hundred bishops attended this Council among whom Cyril of Alexandria who proved to be the orthodox champion and the force behind the condemnation and anathematizing of Nestorios.

### Fourth Ecumenical Council

This Council was convened at Chalcedon, on the Asian side of Constantinople, by emperor Marcian and his wife Poulcheria in 451. It had to deal with another controversy about the Person of Christ. Eutyches, an archimandrite in Constantinople, held that the human nature of Christ had been completely absorbed by His divine nature and thus the two had been confounded into one. Thus, after this union, Eutyches held, there was only one nature in Christ. Hence his heresy was called 'monophysitism', (of one nature). The Council condemned this teaching and affirmed that there were two perfect natures in the one Person of Christ unified 'unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably'. The Council was attended by 650 bishops.

The dogmatic decisions of this Council were expressed by a statement of faith since then called the Chalcedonian Definition. Among other important enactments there was one that the Western Church did not accept: canon 28 by which the archbishop of Constantinople was given the title of Patriarch thus reiterating the decision of the Second Ecumenical Council by which the bishop of Constantinople was given honorary precedence over all other Churches, save that of Rome. Canon 28 of this Council further recognized to the archbishop of Constantinople extensive administrative rights



over a number of provinces around Constantinople and thus made him a Patriarch. This was rejected in the West on the excuse 'that the interests of the older Eastern Patriarchates should be protected'.

#### **Fifth Ecumenical Council**

This Council met in Constantinople in 553 and was convoked by emperor Justinian. The Monophysitic controversy continued unabated even after the condemnation of Eutyches and the issuing of the Chalcedonian Statement of Faith. Personal quarrels among bishops and the interference of the palace in theological and ecclesiastical matters helped to create an unfortunate situation in the Church that even Justinian's great authority and influence failed to correct. Justinian favoured at first the Monophysites but later sided with the formal orthodox view against it. However; empress Theodora encouraged the Monophysites to create new problems by stirring up a new controversy regarding the theological positions of three distinguished theologians already dead for a century; these were the three Antiochian renowned teachers, Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus, and Ibas bishop of Edessa. The accusation was that the writings of all three, tainted with Nestorianism, had been condemned by the Third Ecumenical Council. The Monophysite-accusers wished all three to be condemned even though they were dead. Justinian was compelled by the fury of the controversy to call this Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople which opened on May 5, 553 and was presided over by the Patriarch of Constantinople Eutychios. One hundred sixty five bishops attended, and the writings of the three famous teachers were condemned and they themselves were anathematized. This decision was not easily accepted in the West. During the Council a quarrel erupted between Eastern and Western bishops as to anathematizing the dead, and for a time the name of the Pope was erased from the diptychs. But as a result of Justinian's efforts, a permanent rupture between East and West was prevented. This Council issued no canons, nor did it occupy itself with ecclesiastical matters.

#### **Sixth Ecumenical Council**

The Sixth Ecumenical Council met in Constantinople in 681 and was convened by

emperor Constantine IV (Pogonatos). Monophysitism, in spite of the decisions of the Fifth Ecumenical Council and in spite of the strict laws and other repressive measures against it by subsequent emperors, continued to be a serious disturbance to both Church and State. It actually was used as the foundation for the creation of new and independent Churches such as the Armenian, Abyssinian, and others. And as a result of the reconciliatory endeavours of emperor Herakleios for the purpose of bringing back the Armenians to the Orthodox Church, a new teaching in regard to the Person of Christ began to spread. By it, there is only one will in the God-man Christ. Hence this teaching was called 'monothelitism' and was originally proposed as a midpoint between monophysitism and orthodoxy designed to bring back the monophysites at a time the Byzantine empire was threatened by the Persians and later by the Mohammedans. Both the Patriarch of Constantinople Sergios and Pope Honorius accepted the emperor's formula by which there were two natures in Christ but only one mode of 'activity'. But in a statement of doctrine, the Pope used the unfortunate expression 'of one will' in Christ which from that point on replaced the expedient 'one energy' agreed upon by both parties. After some tumultuous developments, the monotheletic controversy was finally resolved by the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Monotheletism was condemned together with its adherents and the Council proclaimed the existence of two wills in Christ, Divine and Human, to be the correct orthodox position.

#### **The Quinisext or Trullan Council**

This is not the Seventh Ecumenical Council but rather a continuation of the 5th and 6th Ecumenical Councils. It met in Constantinople in the hall under the great dome (Trullos) of the palace. Hence it is known as the Trullan Synod while in Greek it is known as the 5th-6th where from the Latin Quinisext came. It was called by Justinian II in 692. Both the 5th and 6th Ecumenical Councils fully occupied their time with the Christological problem and issued no canons pertaining to ecclesiastical government and order. Actually, the Quinisext may be considered to be the continuation not only of the 5th and 6th but also of all the preceding Ecumenical Councils inasmuch as by its

2nd canon it received and ratified all of their canons and decisions. It also ratified the Apostolic Canons, the canons of local synods, and the most important of the canons of the principal Fathers of the Church, thus empowering all of them with Ecumenical authority.

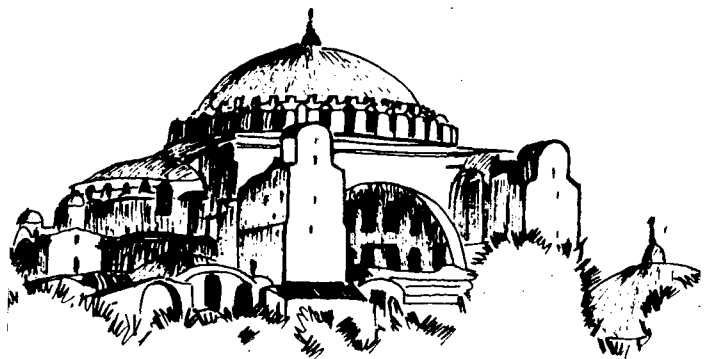
However the disciplinary canons of the Quinisext were not accepted by the Pope, and even though most of them were not completely observed in the East, they contributed appreciably to the widening of differences between East and West. For example, canons 13, 30, and 48 relating to the marital status of the clergy, others regulating the age of ordination, and still others relating to canonical impediments to matrimony, were contrary to already established different practices in the West that the Roman See did not wish to change on directives from the Quinisext Council. However; the same Council tabulated by its 6th canon a shaky practice in the East by which marriage could not be contracted after one had been ordained in any one of the three ranks of priesthood. Thus, and for the first time, priesthood as a sacrament was accorded precedence and superiority over the sacrament of matrimony. And though there is no dogmatical justification for this doctrinal demoting of the sacrament of matrimony, the prohibition of marriage after ordination continues in the Orthodox Church to this day.

#### Seventh Ecumenical Council

This Council dealt predominantly with the controversy regarding icons and their place in Orthodox worship. It was convened in Nicaea in 787 by empress Irene at the request of Thrasios, Patriarch of Constantinople. Almost a century before this, the iconoclastic controversy had once more shaken the foundations of both Church and State in the Byzantine empire. Excessive religious respect to the point of worship, due only to God, was ascribed to icons by certain segments of society and miraculous powers touching upon idolatry were ascribed to them. This instigated excesses at the other extreme by which icons were completely taken out of the liturgical life of the Church. The Council decided on a doctrine by which icons should be venerated but not worshipped. In answering the empress' invitation to the Council, Pope Hadrian replied with a letter in which he also held the posi-

tion of extending veneration to icons but not worship, the last befitting only God. The decree of the Council for restoring icons to churches added an important clause which still stands at the foundation of the rationale for using and venerating icons in the Orthodox Church to this very day: 'The veneration accorded to an icon is meant for and passes to the prototype (the person it depicts)'. The Council issued also 22 canons relating to administrative and disciplinary matters, condemning Simony (ordination for payment), the election of bishops by secular authority, and the erecting of mixed monasteries.

However, and in spite of the recognition of this Council by the Pope, Charlemagne refused to recognize it not only as Ecumenical but altogether He disapproved of its decision for venerating the icons, and as a result of his hostility, a synod at Frankfurt in 794 condemned the veneration of icons and rejected the entire Council. And it was only by the end of the 9th century that the Council was recognized in the West but without its rules that were contrary to the established practices of the Roman Church.



## JOURNEY TO MOUNT ATHOS

### PART 3

It was morning, on my second day on Mount Athos. Overnight I had slept in the guest quarters of the monastery of Xeropotamou and now had woken early to attend the morning orthros service.

The service was followed by the morning meal, after which I went with Father J. to a quiet area within the monastic quarters near a kitchen. Over a Greek coffee I had the opportunity to continue the deep discussion which we started the evening before, on spiritual themes. As we started to wind up the discussion, Father J. (as I found out he is called) suggested I should go and visit a remarkable elder and ascetic called Paisios. Elder Paisios lived alone in a kelli (hut), belonging to the monastery of Koutloumousiou near Karyes (a small town in the centre of the peninsular which acted as a kind of administrative centre).

Father J. spoke very highly of him, and revered him as both a man of great humility and spiritual insight. It was even claimed that he was of such holiness that Elder Paisios manifested many gifts of the Holy Spirit. Pilgrims coming to see him for a blessing or advice, would sometimes have their whole lives laid before them, even though they had never met him before. Others were astonished that he would call them by their name even though they had not yet revealed it to him. His spiritual insight and godly wisdom (delivered from on-high) was tailored for the specific case of each individual.



PHOTO: The monastery of Iveron among thickly wooded forest in the background.

Overall, I received the feeling that many people left him humbled by his presence and with a stronger faith. With such strong endorsement I hoped to visit him should time permit. I bid Father J. farewell, thanked him for his kindness, packed my things and left the monastery. I then walked the relatively short distance to the roadside hoping to catch the bus which would pass the monastery around 11.30am. I had planned to go to the monastery of Iveron on the other side of the peninsular, stopping off at Karyes firstly to visit Elder Paisios.

While I waited, I began to notice the grey clouds gathering above me. Initially ignoring the light spray which started to fall upon me, I began to notice that the light rain was getting ever so heavier. I just hoped that the bus would arrive in time before the downpour of rain. It was early September and rain was by no means unusual at this time.

Just as I was contemplating a quick dash back to the monastery, where I could get some decent shelter, I heard the noise of a vehicle approaching. A 4wd drive landrover drove up and seeing my predicament stopped alongside me. A fogged up window wound down and the monk inside asked me if I wanted a lift. I asked if they were going to go past the Iveron Monastery. An answer to the affirmative had me quickly jumping into the rear cabin bags and all.

Once inside, I settled down into the cabin and thanked them for saving me from a certain drenching. After giving a short description of myself and where I was from, I also asked a few questions of my own. Father S. who was the driver, lived on the southern part of Mount Athos in a Kelli belonging to the monastery of Megali Lavra, and was originally from the island of Crete.

As we dropped off the other monk in the passenger seat at Karyes, for a brief moment, (while the door was open) I considered getting out as well in order to get to the nearby kelli of Elder Paisios. But the rain was still pounding down heavily and the wind was now fiercely blowing, putting a quick stop to any ideas I had about braving the weather. So I considered that I would try my luck next time I passed by here, prob-



ably on my way back.

Further down the road we picked up a couple of travellers, braving the rain, who needed a lift to the monastery of Stavronikita, nearby the monastery of Iveron. When we arrived at Iveron the rain had stopped. I bid Father S. farewell, thanked him and walked towards the main entrance of the monastery hoping to find the guest quarters (arhondariki) and arrange to stay the night.

Making my way through the entrance a passing monk stopped for a moment to point me to the right direction. I noticed something unusual about this monk. Instead of a black beard he had a long red one. I assumed he was a non-Greek monk, since when he replied to my inquiry he spoke in slightly broken Greek with a noticeable foreign accent. I was intrigued by this and hoped to meet him again.

When I arrived at the guestroom I was welcomed and given the customary refreshment offered to new arrivals to the monastery - a glass of cool clear water and some loukoumi (turkish delight). I was asked if I planned to stay the night, and in the meantime waited till a room was assigned to me.

While I was waiting, the monk with the red beard came into the guestroom. I approached him and asked him if he was Greek. He answered that he was in fact English and had converted to orthodoxy from evangelical anglicanism. He told me that he had always been a strong believer in Christ and that he had also been very interested in different forms of art, which expressed meaning. He discovered orthodoxy after a friend introduced him to orthodox iconography. This initial exposure to a part of orthodoxy sparked a study of what orthodoxy was. He converted when he became convinced that this was, as he put it, 'The true faith', and now he was of all things an orthodox monk. As a monk he had also taken a new name, after a early British saint who lived way before the Great Schism. He also introduced me to Brother J. who was a Greek-Australian monk who lived in the monastery and was in his early thirties.

I also met two more guys, both from Melbourne, in their early twenties, in the guest quarters in the same room in which I was to stay for the night. The two of them had been travelling through Mount Athos for

two months from monastery to monastery. Both were very religious and recommended that if I wanted a bed for the night at the monastery of Simonos Petras, where I planned to go next, that I should call them by telephone from this monastery to reserve one. This was because they had stayed there for a while and knew that it was a very popular monastery with pilgrims, with beds for the night difficult to obtain. One of the guys offered to call for me. So after getting permission from the monks, he rang from the one telephone the monastery used for such rare occasions and booked a place for me. I thanked him for this and was also glad he did so as it took my mind off worrying if I could get a bed to stay overnight at Simonos Petras.

Around 2.30pm Brother J. (the Greek-Australian monk) came to visit me and took me around the monastery showing me the sights and buildings. He also showed me the famous icon of the Virgin Portaitissa (of the gate), which I venerated. The story about this miracle working icon goes that the icon lost at sea from Constantinople, travelled over the sea and came to rest at a spot near the present monastery.

I also learnt that originally Iveron was a monastery for monks from Georgia in the Caucasus. But that only in the last few hundred years had Greek monks come to inhabit it. Today there are around eighty monks living in the monastery, most of them Greek, and the last Georgian monk. They died over forty years ago. The very name of the Monastery Iveron, comes from Iberia (Georgia) and betrays its origins. I also managed to have a discussion with brother J. on spiritual themes and about his origins (since he was Greek-Australian like me). I found this very helpful since it helped to really bring this experience on Mount Athos right up to my level, as we both had similar backgrounds. And yes he still had an Aussie accent and we spoke largely in English when together. It was very comforting to meet one of my own, so to speak, here on Mount Athos living as a monk, as well as having someone to whom I could relate to.

Around 5.00pm the afternoon church service began, after which we went to the trapeza (refectory) for our last meal for the day. The meal consisted of fish, a soup, a tomato and a glass of white wine. The rest

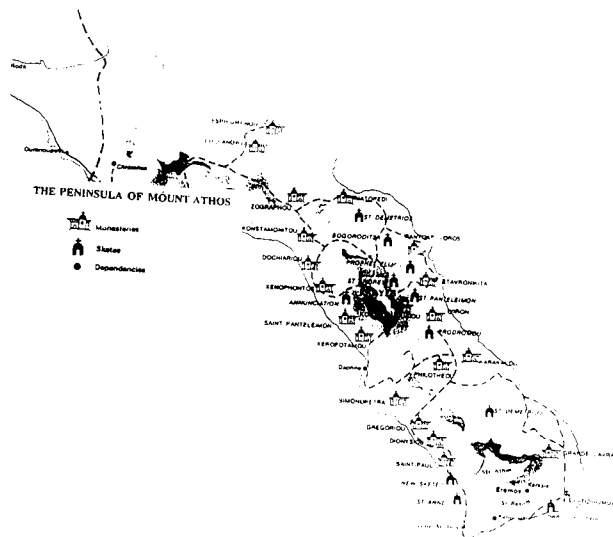
of the evening was spent conversation with the boys from Melbourne. The discussion included our lives, God and experiences on this Holy Mountain. They also mentioned that on Sunday (today was Thursday) an all night vigil would be held at the monastery of Philotheou in honour of Saint Kosmas and told me that all night vigils on Mount Athos were an experience not to be missed. I agreed to go, and they promised to hold a bed for me so that I could attend.

We continued talking until late, until it was time for everyone to go to sleep according to the monastery custom.

By D.V.

Next issue:

"The Monastery of Simonos Petras".



MAP: Mount Athos-An illustrated guide to the monasteries and their history. ref; By Sotiris Kadas 1988, Ekdotike Athenion.



## THE STRUGGLE IN CHRIST In The Apostacy of our Times By Rev. Hieromonk Philotheos Grigoriatis



The monk who struggles to please God doesn't want to speak. His silence and his concealment nourish and strengthen him in his struggle. He seeks obscurity and the hidden mystic life in Christ, because in this way, undisturbed, he enjoys God's communion.

He enjoys the gifts of heaven on this earth and his humble heart feels that something very strange is happening to him. Something very remarkable that if he tries to express it verbally, he reckons that he hasn't said it all, that the description is very weak and is nothing compared to reality. For this reason, he wants to hide it.

However, this something is so strong, that sometimes he can't help showing it. It comes out by itself and unwillingly the monk reveals it. He reveals it humbly, without clear expression or without clear reference to what he experiences. He reveals it simply, moderately and unaffectedly with an informal and inelegant voice.

And this is approximately the content of what he has to say:

"What is this that is happening to me! I asked for forgiveness and what I receive is beyond any notion of pardon and absolution. I was seeking to find some serenity and the peace which is given to me cannot be expressed. I am aware that I was created to receive and give love but this love that I come upon is beyond my expectations. I was struggling to grasp onto some hope but what I find here is tangible serenity, real happiness. I don't want to expect anything else. I don't wish anything higher. I am at a loss with all this. I am puzzled and I say, "All this for me? Why? What have I done? How come I deserve this? Has a mistake been made? "

Once, the devil disguised as an angel of the Lord went to a holy and humble hermit in hope of tempting and deceiving him.

To instill a sense of pride in him, the devil said, "I am God's angel and I have come to help you in your holy struggle and tell you that the Lord is satisfied with your spiritual progress". But the humble monk who had self-awareness and consciousness of human weakness, replied simply, without being disturbed and with an assuredness in his words: "There must be some mistake. I don't deserve to be visited by God's angel. Look to see if you had to visit someone else and you came to me by mistake"! Of course, the devil was dismayed and departed ashamed.

Our soul wonders why so many things are done for it. Is it a mistake?

However it is not deception, thank God. It is no mistake. We, the Orthodox Christians, live the mystery of the love of God in our barren life, "in our mortal flesh". The love of our God, the Holy Trinity makes us worthy to partake in His holy communion as members of His holy Orthodox Church.

We know that we are not worthy of such an honour. We are ill, condemned. Nevertheless, we are blessed 'by His great mercy'.

This is our joy, this is our happiness. The Lord Jesus in His Church who awaits for us, invites us, welcomes us with joy, embraces and greets us tenderly, cleanses and clothes us. He anoints us, admits us in His holy house and co-places us happy participants in the feast of His love.

He does everything. We only whisper weakly and painfully "Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus..."! (Rev. 22, 20)



## GOD'S LOVE AND MAN'S FREE LIFE

"God is Love", the Evangelist John tells us (A' John 4, 8). And indeed this is the best characteristic of God, so that we, the people, understand what God is.

Of course, according to Saint Dionisios, the Areopagitis, and in accordance to the apophatic theology of the Church, God is neither spirit, neither logos, neither power, neither light, neither life, neither substance,

neither time, neither science, neither truth, neither Kingdom, neither wisdom, neither benevolence... (see: "About Mystic Theology, Chapter five")

The above shows that God is beyond every human notion.

However, allow me to say that some exception could be made for the name "love". God is nothing else but Love.

And indeed God, the God of our Fathers the only real God, is not a revengeful God, or even a 'just' one, according to human measures and standards. Not like a just policeman who must impose order by registering our trespasses in detail. Neither is He like a just judge whose duty is to judge impartially in order to reveal and punish the guilty one and thus, setting him as an example, to bring about justice and satisfaction to the legal order.

No, our God is not 'just' in this way. Woe, if He were! Our God is our Father. Our God "is love".

However, many put forth the question - doubt concerning human weakness:

"Since God is love, why then are there so many sorrows, So many injustices and misfortunes in the world?"

In answer we could provide the words of deceased Fr. Epiphaneios Theodoropoulos:

"...Without Christ, the world is irrational. Without Christ you can't explain anything. Why the sorrows, why the injustices, why the failures, why the illnesses. Why? Why? Why? Thousands of huge «whys». Understand this. Man cannot approach with his limited logic the answer to all these «whys». Everything is explained only with Christ. We are being prepared for eternity. Maybe there, we will be worthy to receive an answer to some «whys».." (Fr. Epiphaneios Theodoropoulos, Dialogue with Marxist, Kalamata, 1989, pg.20)

God then is love and He loves man, His creation. Thus God wishes communion with man, a communion of loving persons. Man as a person can love the Personal God, since true love can be directed only towards a person and can exist only in a person. Animals, objects, ideas or philosophies must and can attract man partially, not totally. For this reason every situation that goes beyond this measure of simple sympathy and interest towards animals, objects, etc, is degenerated



and results in passion, in weakness of spirit. It is never true love. Real, personal love vibrates the whole person to the depths of his being and attracts him to the loved person.

Our personal God is not the god of the philosophers of the sceptics. He is the God of our Fathers, a Person and not an idea.

This God, because of His ecstatic love for His personal creation (man), comes forth with His uncreated energies and participates with man in a communion of love, in His Church in Christ.

Basis for real and deep love is free will. It is not possible for someone to love another person if forced to do so by some need or compulsion.

Holy God out of respect and paternal esteem and a loving attitude towards man, wants him free. He doesn't force Himself upon man, but awaits for man's free, personal choice. In other words, God awaits for man's acceptance of Him in his life, but he is always free even to reject Him.

God comes to us and reveals Himself, since with freedom of love we accept Him in our life. His glory and Grace are revealed to us and we enjoy His blessed presence. Through experience we learn what life with God means and how communion with Him is, since if it isn't revealed by Him, we cannot by ourselves find Him and meet Him, our Creator and our Maker.

In contrast, we reject Him from our lives and we don't love Him when we are indifferent to His commandments, according to His word.' "He that has my Commandments, and keeps them, it is he who loves me" (John 14, 21). For this reason we shut our ears to His invitation and we remain alone without God, incapable of love, tasting the desperately bitter agony of our selfishness.

God lets us choose by ourselves and doesn't impose His presence upon us. Discreetly, though, He helps us to overcome our human weakness and to choose what is in our interest. Our interest, no matter if we are aware of it or not, is to find Him, to meet Him, to unite and stay with Him. This is the purpose of our life, this is why we were created by Him.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17,3).

God has his ways of approaching every

soul and attracting it to Himself. He has ways to inform it of His presence, to talk to it, to give it opportunities, motives and possibilities for it to approach Him and to know Him so that man is happy and asks for God to dwell in him.

If the soul, receptive to the Grace of God, comes near Him and desires communion with Him, then God starts a holy "game" with it. At times, He speaks to it with sweetness and kindness and then the soul arises to heaven from a holy, divine love, forgetting all worldly things. At other times, He hides from it and the soul frightened from its deceptive loneliness, sorrowfully seeks Him and endures a holy martyrdom until God reappears to it. God's reappearance increases the soul's amiable desire for Him and purifies it more so. In this manner, God increases His union and communion with the soul and leads it to greater joys and blessing - from glory to glory.

This continues until the end of man's life, according to its susceptibility, each soul partakes in the joy of this loving communion with the Lord.

However, there are souls and unfortunately they are not few, that out of egoism, selfishness and laziness don't accept (Woe!) their God and Lord and are deceived by the devil. They are harassed by the impasses of their earthly life away from God. They are harassed by negligence, indifference or aimless searches and occupations or temporary vain pleasures which in no time become death sufferings. All of these numb the souls, enslave them and destroy them to eternal loss.

Consequently, a terrible and agitating struggle takes place in these souls. A dilemma of life and death is imposed on them every day, every hour, maybe every moment:

Should they make a new start; shake off the chains of this slavery?

Should they deny their own destructive wills?

Should they struggle to be free from the snares of their bloodthirsty enemy, the devil?

Should they slowly begin a new life for their reunion with holy God through a holy practice, alertness, prayer and abstinence?

Or should they be overcome completely by despair and give in fully without any resistance, without reaction to the earthly vani-

ties, to the loss of will-power, to inaction, to the worldly, inhuman and antitheistic pleasures of the flesh? Should they thus cease completely to desire God and His communion?

If, with the Grace of God, the first thoughts prevail and a decision is taken and the decision leads to action, the ex-prodigal soul returns to its Lord's House in repentance and heartbreak, repeating all the while: *"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son"* (Luke 15, 21).

The all-kind Father who ran to welcome the soul now embraces it, brings it into His house, into His Kingdom. And the great joy, the feast of the soul, that now cries out of inexpressible gratitude for its Father's love, begins.

However, if the soul out of egoism, doesn't wish to return to the Father, its awful suffering continues more intensely. It suffers unimaginably even if it doesn't admit it, even if it appears outwardly happy, cheerful and satisfied and even if it doesn't itself consciously feel the suffering.

Thus the souls which in the past were good, pure and graceful become the devil's victims.

They wallow in the mud of the worst passions and disgraces. Clean consciences are defiled. The image of God is blackened.

People of all ages, races and both sexes are maimed, paralyse spiritually and suffer.

The soul's beauty is deprived, defiled and the God woven ornament of the Holy Baptism is torn out. The Kingly spirit is humiliated and brought to shame and people who were created for the glory of heaven, fall miserable spectacles to the malevolent enemy of our salvation.

Even their exterior traits and characteristics, that before witnessed their divine origin, are now deformed as well:

Their "beauty" is now frightfully hideous.

Their "nobleness" and their smile, inhuman and diabolically hypocritical.

Their "decency" and "good manners" are the deceitful expression of their fall.

Their deeds and their words and their "civilization" are deceitful, shallow and fake. All their manners and their existence give out the smell of death and reek of spiritual decay.

The absence of God marks their life and their uncivilized "civilization".

What pain for the holy God, who "wants all people to be saved and become aware of the truth"!

What pain for the Church!

What grief for us to know all these things, to encounter them around us and to see them in many souls "for which Christ has died"!



## THE FALSE MASK OF THE WORLD

Living the struggle in Christ, the monk suffers for his brethren in the world. He leaves this world not hating or defying it, but feeling that in this way he offers himself more substantially to his brethren in the world. He wants and he struggles to be as God wants him: A burning candle for the world in front of the icon of Christ the Lord, the Theotokos and the Saints.

He prays, suffering for the world and mostly for those who live away from God and His joys.

\* He suffers for knowing that our era has built with the devil's help many high walls to prevent people from running to the city of God, the Church.

The devil has decorated beautiful and diabolically appealing displays (all tragic substitutes for the Truth), so that the unfortunate people are occupied only with the earthly and the vain. The devil has managed to make people forget about God, the soul and eternal life. With his delusive lies he manages to distract man from worshipping the only real God and he ingeniously convinces him to worship the contemporary idols.

\* The monk suffers for this false world where an active, vicious circle puts men to death spiritually.

Sensuality and eudaemonism darken

the mind and increase the doubt for everything sacred and holy in our Faith. This quickly leads the people to infidelity and atheism, that in their turn bring about and promote materialism. Thus again cultivating gross passions, sensualism and hedonism.

Philosophically there is confusion and disorder of ideas with the ultimate goal being the absolution of relativity and subjectivity in every judgement and thought of man, since man is the measure of all things.

There is total acknowledgement of the kingdom of self-love in which "Homo homini lupus" (the man is a wolf for other men) totally prevails.

The unlimited and egoistic enjoyment of every legitimate or illegitimate material and sensual passion, without noble and higher interests and perspectives is a direct daily and ephemeral purpose.

There exists a well set "jungle of men with total oblivion of death, of the judgement and of the desired Home, Paradise, as well.

\* The monk suffers for the sins, the great, the terrible and unspeakable of, "for which things it is a shame even to speak of" (Ephesians 5, 12). Sins which dishonour the soul and which take the soul from its high position and purity of its communion with God and thrust it to the abyss of hell, to the companionship with unclean demons.

\* He suffers for the indifference of men to their fellow men, for the lack of communion between the souls and the dissolution of every holiness in their relations.

He suffers for:

- The complete absence of trust,
- The commercialization of friendship
- The ridicule of the mystery of marriage.
- The degradation of the great gift of God of fatherhood and motherhood.
- The dissolution of the family.

\* He suffers for the spiritual ignorance that comes to man because of all his apostasies:

- Ignorance about Himself
- Ignorance about the mystery of life and the purpose of creation.
- Ignorance about his God and Creator.

\* He even suffers for the inconsolation of the people of this world to suffering. He grieves for the nonexistence of hope and support in difficult times and crucial mo-

ments of life, since the God who will console, the Paraclete, is absent.

One easily understands the omniscience of our holy God, our Father, Who finds the use of pain as a last opportunity for the probable return of the souls to Him. Maybe a last means of "forcing" these people to comprehend the chaos of the loss that threatens them. His salvatory, "scandalous" love intervenes in this way in their spiritual paralysis. He allows misfortunes and sorrows, diseases, disasters, death and various pains in their lives, "that (His) house may be filled" (Luke 14, 23), lest they may want to return to Him.

\* He also suffers for the "joys" of this world. He grieves for the amusements which really confuse the human mind; for the "entertainments" that tire and destroy the soul, instead of calming and helping it go forward.

And it is not only painful, to ascertain all the above, but you also suffer for those things that are thought to be good, positive and creative.

\* You suffer for the work of the people, or even better, as it is indeed called "labour". Because in fact it is slavery, since even when at first sight it is not shameful and illegal, it disorients man from his main objective. Because it is rendered an end in itself, cut off from the vital content it ought to have, a service of love that should unify us with God and our fellow men.

\* You suffer for the emptiness of thinking of many intellectuals who consolidate man's stay here on earth (on the ground) with their foolish scepticism, shutting in this way the last windows to Heaven.

\* You suffer for politics and its supporters where lies and dishonesty are openly camouflaged and prevail over deceivers and deceived.

Where people, but for rare laudable exceptions, without moral and spiritual reputation, are applauded and declared to be "saviours of people".

You suffer for rulers who rule not according to the written word, "I will give you shepherds after my own heart" (Jerem. 3,15), which means rulers by the wish of God. You feel pain for them because they are rulers without interest and concern for the will of the Lord Almighty. For this reason, too, they are not God's chosen, not the Lord's anointed. They act only in conformity with



the opposing to God as well as transgressing desires and egoistic policies of their own subjects. They are such that the words of the prophet befit them perfectly: "For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jerem. 4, 22).

\* You suffer for the nation's educational system which is without God and thus without much meaning and future.

There are schools in which the atheist and useless teachers are rapidly increasing in number. By their bad example, these teachers educate the youth to be idle, vain, self-loving and indifferent to public matters. There are enough such schools that Saint Kosmas Aetolos would have closed today.

\* You suffer for the legitimate and illegitimate information that controls everything. You grieve for the barrage of news, advertisements and the many other damaging programs from the so called "mass media".

All these greatly contribute to the unreasonable "variety" in the meaningless and uninteresting life of the people-masses and they are content just to arouse man's curious hearing and his interest for scandals and everything vain, eccentric and mostly sensual.

You suffer for the void expressions and soul corrupting spectacles to people's senses that ruin their souls and render them passive receivers. Passive receivers without the slightest ability for a healthy reaction to whatever harmful they hear and see.

You suffer for the way the earth's rulers use secret weapons in order to be able to pass on, whenever they wish, their devilish plans and messages. These men of authority hold the strings and control like puppets their obedient, irresolute subjects, thus destroying anything beautiful that is left, if it is left, in the souls of many people and mostly the youth.

Furthermore, besides the souls accumulation of all destructive passions we have as a result inactivity, the indifference towards one's neighbour's sufferings and the unwillingness for tranquillity, self-examination and prayer.

\* The monk also suffers for the lack of

leaders, capable assistants with spiritual stature who will foresee as prophets of their generation, but who will also be directed and in turn direct towards the correct course that leads to the kingdom of God.

\* He suffers for our children that grow up in this fake society and are brought up with lies which they daily receive in their still clean souls. He feels pain because these children are nourished by various toxic spiritually substances which lead them, very early later on in life, to get accustomed to such things and become "worthy" children of such a civilization.

\* He suffers for our country's wretchedness, the country of the holy and glorious race of our Fathers. Although it gave the lights of its true Orthodox civilization to so many peoples and made them glorious, now it itself is losing its true Orthodox civilization. Instead, it has reached the point that by begging to the East and the West and sacrificing much, it swallows with great willingness and voracity the dirty wastes of the unsuccessful western way of life. With difference only in timing, it imports with pride everything that brought atheism and materialism to the West. Everything that has driven out every trace of humanity and descency from the human face.

\* The monk also suffers for the difficult and inhuman living conditions that all these "achievements" of our apostasy from the God of our Fathers create:

- The ecologic destruction and the pollution of the environment.
- The stress and the unnatural tension of life in the contemporary, big cities.
- The dangerous increase of every kind of illegality, of suicides and of crimes.
- The destructive, huge spread of drugs.
- Terrorism and anarchy.
- Wars.
- The babelic lack of understanding and disorder of every kind and the so many things that spread like an epidemic, are all evident proof of the spiritual decay that covers almost everything.

Of course we must confess that our world would be hopelessly unbearable, deformed, foul, and useless if there weren't in it the striving Christians and Saints. These are the people of God in whose blessed souls dwells the life-giving Grace of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit which beautifies them and

their life and also influences positively everything around them: nature, cities, relationships and other people's lives.

\* Finally, the monk suffers deeply for the legalization of the unjust, the illegal, the unlawful and the sinful. The legalization of sin, being the worst, is the major characteristic of our times.

The monk suffers for the legislation of laws and statutes contrary to the eternal law of God. This legislation is passed so that wretched man ceases to have a guilty consciousness and guilts for the repentance of sins. It is passed, so man "liberated" from His paternal protection, His holy commandments, does not fear God.

They beautify thus everything to give a false picture here on earth, since the existence of Heaven is not wanted. They beautify their prodigal life - the rags of the empty 'culture' that they wear. They beautify the devilish dirt with which they nourish themselves so that they won't have to admit that they are hungry, naked and homeless.

They dare make all these into ideologies, with their studies and enlightened would be dissertations, articles and "scientific essays". But these are senseless, silly and soul-corrupting inventions that God hates!

"Woe to those who call the evil good and the good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5, 20).

In this distortion of the God-like image of man and in man's tragic failure to create a holy society and a holy civilization, the way he has been summoned to do by his holy Creator, unfortunately in this distortion few people are conscious of some of the above mentioned.

And the greatest pain, the unbearable one, is to think that all these people-masses, as they want to call themselves, are not aware of the existence of the brilliant world of Faith.

They are not aware of what they miss by not being members of Christ, of what they deprive themselves of by living a life away from their paternal house.

All this pain urges the monk's humble heart to cry out:

Brethren, let's stand righteously!

Let's return to Christ, let's recover from the sleep of the deceptive life!

Brethren, let's repent!

In our repentance lies the key to all the closed doors and dead ends of our life.

Let's struggle for Truth, Christ, the God of our Fathers. Let's return back to truly rejoice in His joy, His peace.

"The world pass away and the lust thereof" (A' John 2, 12). The world will be abolished, the untruth will appear and disappear and then what will we do?

Let's find Christ. Let's accept Him in our lives.

Let's follow Him!

(Continued next edition)



## SAINT LAURENTIUS THE DEACON

Laurentius the deacon, not unlike the first martyr and first deacon Stephen, was one of the seven deacons of Rome, assisting Sixtus II, Bishop of Rome. He lived during the period of Decian persecutions.

Laurentius was responsible for the altar vessels. He was arrested and brought before Decius, who ordered him to surrender all the treasures of the Church.

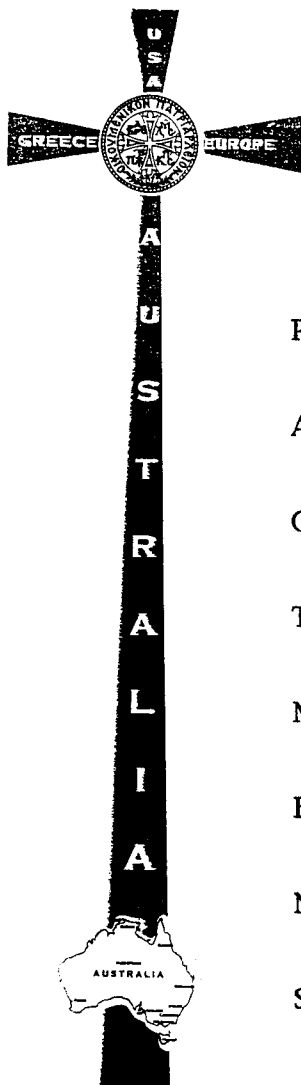
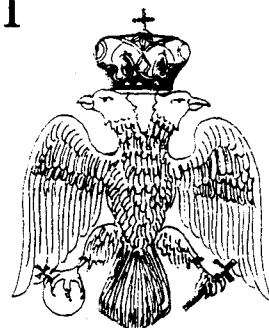
Laurentius then went out into the surrounding areas and gathered together all the widows, the orphans, the poor, the lame and the sick, and brought them before Decius, saying, "These, your majesty, are the treasures of the Church". Decius had him imprisoned, tortured and finally he suffered martyrdom, and received the crown of glory.

From this we learn that nothing is more valuable than a human being. The Church celebrates the feast day of Saint Laurentius on the 10th August. (Voice of Orthodoxy)



# ORTHODOX WORLD NEWS

## PATRIARCHAL VISIT NOVEMBER 1996



Perth	Friday 8th November -Saturday 9th November
Adelaide	Saturday 9th November -Tuesday 12th November
Canberra	Tuesday 12th November -Wednesday 13th November
Tasmania	Wednesday 13th November -Thursday 14th November
Melbourne	Thursday 14th November - Monday 18th November
Brisbane	Monday 18th November - Wednesday 20th November
New Zealand	Wednesday 20th November - Saturday 23rd November
Sydney	Saturday 23rd November - Wednesday 27th November



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